Narrative of Morgan L. Martin

NARRATIVE OF MORGAN L. MARTIN.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE EDITOR.

I landed at Green Bay on the 20th of May, 1827—sixty years ago. Our vessel was the La Grange,1 a chance sailor, loaded with officers and provisions for the garrison at Fort Howard. Among these officers was Brig. Gen. Hugh Brady, commanding the western department of the army, who was on a tour of observation to the western posts. Maj. Benjamin F. Larned, the paymaster, who, in 1854, became paymaster-general, was also with the party on an official visit to the fort, where he was no doubt welcomed by the troops. There were several civilian passengers as well, who had boarded the boat at Detroit, and were upon various errands to the people of the wilderness, although the greater number of such got off at Mackinaw, en route. Among the passengers for Green Bay was Father Fauvel,2 a Catholic priest,— the first of his church, I think, to land in Green Bay after the close of the early missions; he stayed here with us for several years. I think that several military attachés, and Messrs. Cass and McKenney, were also on board, —the two latter being on their way to attend a treaty with the Menomonees, at Butte des Morts, which was held in August following.

1 Of Detroit, one of the Newberry line, Capt. Bingley. Another of the Newberry boats was officered by Capt. Allen.— Ed.

2 For sketch of Fauvel's checkered career, see French's *Hist. Brown Co*. (1876), p. 70.— Ed.

I established my law office at Shanty Town. It was a room in a story and-a-half frame building, still standing, and occupied by a branch of the Ducharme family.3 25

3 *The Green Bay Gazette* of Dec. 12, 1887. in a biographical sketch of Judge Martin, gives a list of his abiding places previous to his marriage: “He at first boarded with the families of Maj. Robt. Irwin and his sons at Shanty Town; then with Mr. Carpenter at the same place, and in 1828 moved down to Judge Arndt's, where he continued to board through seven years, Then he went to the old Washington house, of pleasant memory, meanwhile having rooms with Dr. Geo. S. Armstrong, now of Buffalo.” — Ed.

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There were, perhaps, about one hundred civilians at the Bay settlement when I arrived.1 They were French and mixed-blood voyageurs, in the main,— in the winters attending on the Indian traders, who also lived in the community, and in summers cultivating an acre or so apiece, mainly planted to vegetables. In the fall, a trader, in setting out for the Indian country, would engage four or five, or more, of these voyageurs for the season, according to the extent of business anticipated. Their duty was to help load and propel the boats; collect furs from the savages throughout the winter, and indeed perform any service the trader might ask of them, however menial. The voyageurs were bound to the trader by an iron-clad contract, among its many curious provisions being one that the former should submit to living on corn and grease, or in fact any sort of edible which the exigencies of this rough life might demand.

1 Cf. Judge Martin's brief description of early Green Bay, in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, viii., p. 209; x., pp. 139, 140.— Ed.

The traders themselves exercised a marked influence, for good or evil, over the Indians with whom they traded, and could generally sway them as they saw fit. This was especially the case with the free-and easy Frenchmen, who always seemed to be hand-in-glove with their dusky brethren of the forest, with whom they were often united by ties of blood. John Lawe, Jacques Porlier, Louis Grignon and Lewis Rouse are the only French traders whom I can remember as being here in 1827. They all of them operated in the interest of the American Fur Company. Daniel Whitney, William Dickinson and Robert and A. J. Irwin

were trading on their own account. These traders all lived here and had families, so far as I can remember.

At Milwaukee were located the posts of Jacques Vieau and Solomon Juneau.2 Vieau was, at that time, I think,

2 Cf. Andrew J, Vieau's narrative, *ante*.— Ed.

387 equipped by Daniel Whitney, while Juneau represented Astor's company. I remember that in 1833 there was a treaty council at Chicago, at which some traders' claims were to be settled from the Indian annuities. I arrived there on the first morning of the council, having been sent to represent Whitney's interests. I found Vieau and asked him whether he had put in his claim. He replied that he had, and on my asking for the papers showed them to me. Now Vieau had lest $2,000 for Whitney through the Indians at Milwaukee, in consequence of an epidemic of small-pox, a year or two before, as I ascertained after some detailed inquiry. But as he could neither read nor write, he had allowed some one to fix up a claim of but $500, and this he had presented. I at once had Vieau withdraw this and amend it to the proper amount, which was allowed, and Whitney got his money.

Michael Brisbois and James H. Lockwood were trading for themselves at Prairie du Chien; so also was John B. Brunet, but the latter's brother-in-law, Joseph Rolette,1 operated for the American Fur Company. It is possible that there may have been others at the Prairie, but these are all I can remember.

1 *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ix., pp. 293–296, 465.— Ed.

Pierre Paquette was at the Portage, transporting boats with teams of horses and oxen; and perhaps trading as well. Francis le Roy had a trading house there also, at this time.

Some of the Indian trading posts, in those days, were of a permanent character. The trader would build a log house for his family, should he chance to have one, and log buildings for store and warehouse, near by. Here, if trade warranted, he would return each

fall and pass the winter with savages and wild animals for companions. Milwaukee, Fond du Lac and Fox River (below Lake Winnebago) were such stations, being supplied from Green Bay; but at Butte des Morts, the Portage and Prairie du Chien, the traders lived all the year round. As a rule, however, the Indian trade was conducted in the wilderness with but temporary quarters and but little care for permanent locations, although some of the operators had a preference for familiar districts. 388 Once, Whitney established a man on the St. Peters river in Minnesota. Lawe had an agent named Stanislaus Chappue, who worked up trade on the Menomonee river; having for a neighbor one William Farnsworth,1 equipped by Whitney. Down the Wisconsin, on the Wolf, in the Shawano country, on the upper Mississippi and along the bay shore, could be found the traders of this section, eager for peltries, and gathering about them crowds of Indians who had themselves become quite shrewd in bartering for those products of civilization which had grown to be a necessity of their being. Barter was at the time the only form of exchange in the frontier trade,— money was never used.

1 In *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ix., pa. 397, Judge Martin has a sketch of Farnsworth.— Ed.

The community I found here, sixty years ago,2 was more peaceful than any we have since known. There was but little crime. The French people were free-and-easy, good-hearted and hospitable. The greater part of the settlement was on the east side, but there was a scattering along the west bank. The lower part of the hamlet was very near the line between Astor and Navarino. The farm lowest down was that of Pierre Grignon; then, going up stream, that of John Lawe, a portion of which my residence now occupies; above this, a small farm owned by Louis Grignon. The next settler, whose place attained the dignity of a farm, was Lewis Rouse; Amable du Rocher had a farm above this; and then Joseph Ducharme, upon a portion of which Shanty Town was built. On the west side, Jacques Porlier owned the farm nearest the mouth, and above him was Dominique Brunet. I do not remember anything that could be called a farm until one got up to the place of a man called Prisque Hyott.3 But altogether there were not over four or five real farms.

There were several small spring-planting fields, scattered along on the east side of the river as far as Depere,—such as those of Robinson, Louis Beaupré,4 La Mure,

2 Cf. *Id.*, viii., p. 209; x., pp. 136–140.— Ed.

3 Spelled Aillotte, in Id., x., p. 188, and Your in *Id.*, iii, p. 242.— Ed.

4 Spelled Bauprez, *Id.*, p. 139.— Ed.

389 John B. la Borde, Hardwick and half a dozen others,—but none of them had enough land to rank as farmers. Fronting them, on the opposite bank, were perhaps a dozen similar cabin patches. At Depere, on the east side, a short distance above the dam, and near the bank, was still remaining the foundation of the old Jesuit mission. It was in the immediate neighborhood of an old place afterwards occupied by William Dickinson.

When I arrived, three or four small farms were being opened on the margin of the bay, in the present town of Scott. I remember seeing the clearings from the deck of the La Grange, as we approached the Bay settlement, but I do not recollect the names of their occupants.

Augustin Grignon was located at the Kaukauna rapids, on the north side, below the present city of Kaukauna. He had a good sized farm with a number of cattle, sheep and horses, and traded with the Indians. His log house was a very comfortable dwelling for those days; he had a large frame barn, and about that time built for himself a spacious frame store-building.

The farmers whom I first met here, were, most of them, plowing with oxen. A pair of cattle, instead of being joined by neck-yokes, would have their horns lashed to a straight stick, to which were tied ropes fastened to the long rude beam of a primitive plow—a pointed stick serving as a share. The device was about as effective as a modern corn-row marker. In the slight furrow the seeds were planted, and subsequent cultivation, such as there was, left to the hoe. Lawe, Grignon and Porlier were the leading farmers, although none of them

did much work. Judged by present standards, their establishments could hardly be called farms. These early settlers and traders were too lazy to fish or hunt, or enjoy any sport that would attract an American or English gentleman; but they were obliged to keep their eyes open upon the action of men inimical to their interests, and those inclined to unlawful appropriation of worldly goods.

There had been a school in the Bay settlement, I think, for two or three years previous to 1827, but I do not recollec t 390 that there was any in progress when I arrived. Father Fauvel started a parish school in a small log house built for the purpose near where the water-works pumping station now is. He also used it for chapel purposes. I attended his service but once, and that was some few months after he came. I went in, walked up to the altar, and in a whisper told him I would like to borrow his seine. He replied in the same tone that I could have it, but must return the article by a certain hour, when he would be through with his service and should want to use it himself. This chapel was the only church in Green Bay at that time. When I landed here, the community was destitute of regular spiritual instruction; although I think that Eleazer Williams, the Episcopalian missionary among the Oneidas, had been in the habit of occasionally appearing on the scene and gathering a small congregation.

Williams has been about as thoroughly discussed as any character in the history of Wisconsin. I never was any admirer of the man or his methods, but I am inclined to think that General Ellis and others1 are somewhat too severe upon him. A man reared amid savage surroundings, as he was, should be judged by a different standard than we set up for one who has spent his life entirely among white people. No one can from childhood fraternize with Indians without absorbing their characteristics to some extent,—and becoming vain, deceitful and boastful. He was a remarkable man in many respects, but was deeply imbued with false notions of life, and his career was a failure. He was neither better nor worse than his life-long companions, and was what might have been expected

from one who had been sent into the world with certain racial vices, and whose training and associations were not calculated to better him.

1 *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vi., p. 308, *et seq.*; viii., p. 322, *et seq.*— Ed.

On my first arrival at Green Bay, May 20, 1827, I had letters to the Indian agent, Maj. Henry B. Brevoort, from Governor Cass, relative to some law matters in which the 391 agent had become entangled with rival traders in his district, resulting in several suits then pending in the United States court. The agency building occupied by Major Brevoort and family was the headquarters of the officer commanding Camp Smith, which was only a few rods from Shanty Town, the commercial emporium of the Bay settlement. In my business intercourse with the agent, he appeared to me intelligent and agreeable—a very pronounced specimen of “the gentleman of the old school.” He had served many years as an officer in the United States army, appearing upon the register of 1812 as captain of the 2d regiment of infantry, of which Col. John Bowyer was commandant. His family consisted of his wife and an only daughter, afterwards married to a gentleman in Detroit, and I presume still living.1 Of the life of Major Brevoort, after leaving the Indian agency at Green Bay, in 1830, I can give no particulars beyond the fact that he went to Detroit.

1 *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, viii., p. 293, *et seq.*,—an entertaining sketch of early times in the Northwest, by Major Brevoort's daughter, Mrs. Mary Ann Brevoort Bristol.— Ed.

Brevoort succeeded Maj. John Biddle2 as Indian agent at Green Bay. Biddle was also an officer of the United States army, previous to and during the war of 1812; he lived and

2 John Biddle was born in Pennsylvania; 2d lieut., 3rd artillery, July 6, 6, 1812; 1st lieut., March, 1813; captain of 42d infantry, Oct. 1, 1813; transferred to corps artillery, May 17, 1815; major asst. inspector general, June, 19, 1817; disbanded, June 1, 1821. From August, 1815, to November, 1817, he was commandant at Fort Shelby, Detroit; in 1821, chairman of trustees of original Michigan University; in 1827–28, mayor of Detroit; 1828, first vice-president of the Historical Society of Michigan, holding the office for nine years,

and in 1832, delivering au address before that body which is published in *Historical and Scientific Sketches of Michigan*; first president of Farmers and Mechanics' bank, of Detroit, 1829–1838; chairman of the Association for Promoting Female Education in Detroit; president of Michigan Central railroad in 1835. Elected to represent Michigan Territory in congress, in the fall of 1829, he arrived at Washington December 6, having been compelled to travel nine hundred of the intervening thousand miles on horseback, such were the difficulties of traversing the wilderness then stretching between the capital of the nation and the heart of the Northwest.— Ed.

392 died a prominent citizen of Detroit, and one of its most estimable public characters. He was a delegate from Michigan to congress, in 1829–30.

Samuel C. Stambaugh was appointed Indian agent at Green Bay by President Jackson, in 1831. He was the publisher of a county newspaper in Pennsylvania and was supposed to have received the appointment as a reward for political services, his personal character not being such as to commend him to public favor. His nomination was said to have been promptly rejected by the senate, on account of dissolute habits while at Washington with an Indian delegation in the winter of 1831–32. He was then sent out by the president as a special agent—Col. George Boyd being transferred from Mackinaw (where he had served several years) to the vacant agency of Green Bay. Stambaugh's title of “colonel” was not conferred, it is believed, for military services ever rendered by him before or during his temporary appointment as agent. I was elected in 1831 to the legislative council of Michigan, the sessions of which were to be held at Detroit, commencing early in 1832. There was at that date no mode of reaching Detroit from Green Bay, except by vessel or a trip on horseback of five hundred miles—through the whole distance, an Indian country. This session necessitated my absence from Green Bay during the greater part of Stambaugh's career among us, and I would have seen very little of him but that I visited Washington in the fall of 1831, where he had taken a delegation of Indians on his individual responsibility to treat for a cession of a portion of their lands. I there met him casually, and was asked and declined to interfere with his professed objects. After

his retirement from public employment, about 1836 or 1837, I again casually met him in Washington. I can only speak of him, therefore, from public report and not from personal knowledge. He was not considered generally as a man who accomplished anything worthy of note.

Col. George Boyd, the successor of Stambaugh, was a gentleman of refined manners, the brother-in-law of President J. Q. Adams, and remained agent for several years. His 393 papers are in the archives of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.1 He was a man of superior intelligence, but extremely passionate,—which weakness sometimes involved him in personal difficulties with his neighbors, but never severed him from the true character of a polished and popular gentleman, both in and out of office. The descendants of Colonel Boyd are still residents of northeastern Wisconsin.

1 Agent Boyd's letter-book is a mine of interesting historical material. The portion covering the Stambaugh expedition, in the Black Hawk war, had been prepared and very fully annotated, for this volume of *Collections*, but a press of other matter crowded it out. It will undoubtedly be given in vol. xii.— Ed.

The only Pawnee slave I ever saw, attracted my attention soon after my advent here. She was not then in bondage, having been freed some time before, but for many years succeeding her capture from her tribe she had been in a condition of slavery. She was, when I first saw her, the wife of a French voyageur named Busché, and some of their descendants are living in Green Bay at this time.

I have been questioned relative to the Indian occupancy of the islands at the entrance of Green Bay. The group was originally known as the “Pottawattamie islands,” and all, I think, were occasionally occupied by the tribe from which they derived their name. When the first vessel came here with troops, in 1816, it had on board Col. Talbot Chambers,2 Col. John Bowyer,3 Indian agent, and others. They

2 Col. Talbot Chambers was appointed to the army from Pennsylvania; 1st lieut., 5th infantry, June 18, 1808; captain, Oct. 31, 1811; major asst. adj. general, April 2, 1813; major, 4th rifles, Feb. 21, 1814; transferred to rifle regiment, May 17, 1815; lieut. colonel, March 8, 1817; colonel, Nov. 10, 1818; transferred to 1st infantry, June 1, 1821; dismissed, April 28, 1826. For gallant conduct in the sortie from Fort Erie, was brevetted lieut. colonel, Sept. 17, 1814. While commandant at Fort Crawford, he acquired the reputation of being a despot and made many enemies. See *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ii., pp. 128, 129; ix., p. 466.— Ed.

3 Col. John Bowyer was born in Virginia; appointed lieut. of infantry, March 7, 1792; in 3d sub legion, Dec., 1792; in 3d inf., Nov., 1796; captain Jan., 1799; retained, April, 1802, in 2d inf.; major of 2d inf., Aug. 18, 1808; lieut. col., July 6, 1812; colonel of 5th inf., March 13, 1814; disbanded, June, 1815. He arrived at Green Bay as Indian agent, in 1815, and died in office, 1820.— Ed.

394 christened the different islands with names, as “Washington,”1 “Chambers,” “Green,” etc., and the bold bluff as Bowyer's bluff. These names have been retained, but my own impression is that the whole group of islands and the main land were occupied originally by the Pottawattamies. My personal knowledge of old-time signs is derived from a single visit made in passing by canoe from Green Bay to Mackinaw in 1828, in company with the late Governor Doty. We landed on Washington island, and found there evidences of Indian occupancy, whether as old as Marquette's time could not of course be determined one hundred and fifty years afterwards.2 I think, however, that the tribe made their summer quarters further south, and that their visits to these islands were occasional only, as were those of the Ottawas at a later day even, to Beaver islands.

1 The Washington, 100 tons (Capt. Dobbins), the largest vessel then on the lakes, brought the officers to Green Bay.— Ed.

2 We landed, also, on one or two ethers near the northern main land.—M. L. M.

When I came here, sixty years ago, the whole region extending from the entrance to the bay as far south as Milwaukee, on the lake shore, was occupied by Pottawattamies and Ottawas. Their principal villages were at Manitowoc, Pigeon and Sheboygan rivers. There were none, I think, north of Kewaunee, and I doubt very much whether there were any except temporary lodges as far north as the islands.

From Father Hennepin's account, the Griffin,—or “Gryphon,” as he calls it,—was loaded with peltries, but at what point gathered does not appear, and probably the vessel had entered the bay or coasted the lake further south. There is a harbor at Washington island, and, if landing was made anywhere in that vicinity, it was probably there, as none of the others, except the one immediately north of it, are of sufficient dimensions to warrant the belief of early occupation in considerable numbers.

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In 1828, I went upon a canoe voyage from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien, up the Fox and down the Wisconsin rivers. I was in company with Judge James Duane Dory,1 his marshal, Thomas Rowland, and the deputy marshal, William Meldrum—all of Detroit except myself. The year before, had occurred the Winnebago outbreak at Prairie du Chien, and the murderer Red Bird and his friends were now to be tried at a special term of court. Judge Doty had appointed me United States district attorney, *pro tem.* ,2 hence my presence with this judicial party. Our conveyance was a large birch-bark canoe, manned by four voyageurs, picked up at the Bay; and our time of leaving, the first of August.

1 Appointed Feb. 1, 1823, as additional judge for the Territory of Michigan, with jurisdiction over that portion of the Territory lying west of Lake Michigan; salary, $1,200 per annum.—Ed.

2 The United States district attorney for Michigan was Daniel Leroy, with a salary of $200 per annum and fees.— Ed.

At Kaukauna rapids, we found Augustin Grignon. The Menomonees had a planting ground on the south side of the stream, but there was no village there.

On Doty's island, very near the mouth, on the west channel, was the village of Hootschope, or Four Legs, the wellknown Winnebago chieftain. There were from one hundred and fifty to two hundred lodges there, covered with bark or mats. We found Four Legs to be a very ordinary looking Indian and only stopped at his town for a few minutes, while the voyageurs were taking our craft over the Winnebago rapids.

Garlic island was the next stopping place. There was a Winnebago village there of about the same size as that over which Four Legs presided. The lodges, however, were longer and neater. We purchased a supply of vegetables of the island villagers.

At Butte des Morts was a large village of the Menomonees. Their chief, I think, was Oshkosh. It was difficult,—impossible, in fact,—to correctly estimate the population of these villages we passed on our way, for the females and children of both sexes were exceedingly shy and kept out of view.

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Pierre Paquette was at the Portage, and helped us across with one of his teams. Paquette's log house was on the west bank of the Fox. Francis le Roy lived in the neighborhood, on the opposite shore, near where Fort Winnebago was afterwards established. We were entertained at Paquette's, both going and coming, on our tour.

The next Indian community was on the Wisconsin river, possibly where Prairie du Sac now is. We could see a few lodges near the steep bank, but not the entire village, for we did not stop.

The settlement of Prairie du Chien consisted of but a dozen or twenty houses. The principal man was Joseph Rolette, the fur trader. At the house of another trader, John B. Brunet, we found entertainment, after the fashion of the country. I remember that there

was a French serving woman at this quasi hotel, who had escaped from the Red Bird massacre; her daughter, a little girl of five or six, was going minus her scalp, and was shown to us as one of the curiosities of the place.

On arriving at the Prairie, I met Lucius Lyon, then a United States surveyor, and afterwards United States senator from Michigan,1 who had just completed his survey of the private French land claims there. Having found, on reaching the end of my canoe trip, that President Adams had appointed John Scott, the congressman from Missouri, as prosecuting attorney, and that my services in the Red Bird case were not needed, after all, Lyon and I planned for a tour through the lead mines. I had known Lyon in Detroit; and in the spring of 1828 he had passed through Green Bay in his canoe, en route for Prairie du Chien.

1 Elected at the organization of that state in 1836, and serving till 1840.— Ed.

There were no maps of this country, then; but Lyon had a small pocket compass with him and took the courses and distances of the Fox-Wisconsin route, and made the first approximately correct map of that water highway; later, on my return from Galena to Prairie du Chien, I did the same for the Mississippi; we then put our notes together and gave the result to a prominent eastern map-maker who adopted 397 it as a part of the geography of the country. It was published in 1829 or 1830, and was the first real map of the country between Green Bay and Galena. I was much gratified, afterwards, to see that later official surveys of the Mississippi corresponded exactly with mine.

Lyon and I started down the Mississippi from Prairie du Chien on a very primitive sort of steamer; there were two vessels like Mackinaw boats, with a platform between and a shed built on that—it was, in fact, a steam catamaran. During the entire time court was in session at the Prairie, we staid at Galena, and then Judge Dory and Rowland came down and joined us there. After a few days, Lyon and I went on what was then a decidedly novel trip, an expedition through the mining region north of Galena. Our first objective

point was Dodgeville, where Henry Dodge had started a “diggings.” We found his cabins surrounded by a formidable stockade, and the miners liberally supplied with ammunition. The Winnebagoes had threatened to oust the little colony, and were displaying an ugly disposition. Dodge entertained us at his cabin, the walls of which were well covered with guns. He said that he had a man for every gun and would not leave the country unless the Indians were stronger than he. At Platteville was John H. Rountree, who, with his men, lived in tents.1 We did not see Rountree himself, at that time, but were much impressed with what was pointed out to us as his claim. There was a hole some twenty feet square and four or five deep, the bottom of which was a solid body of lead. There was a family at Blue Mounds living with Ebenezer Brigham; they were, with Brigham, the first settlers at the place.2 Brigham was not at home, but the man with a family was, and entertained us in his cabin, which was used as a hotel when occasion required.

1 *Hist. Grant Co.* (West. Hist. Co., 1881), pp. 675, 676; Rountree, accompanied by Maj. J. B. Campbell, William Ruby and John M. Williams, commenced mining operations in Platteville, November, 1827.— Ed.

2 *Hist. Dane Co.* (West Hist. Co., 1880), pp. 346–348; Brigham's house was on s. w. ¼, s. w. ¼, section 5, town of Blue Mounds, Dane county; his diggings were on section 7, and had been previously worked by Indians; he located at Blue Mounds, the spring of 1828.— Ed.

398 We spread our blankets upon the bare ground, which was the floor of our hostelry, but slept quite as soundly as one might in the best chamber of a palace hotel. This man was fairly wild on the subject of lead mining. He had bought a quarter-section of land and spent all of his money in prospecting, but in vain. His signal failure, however, did not in the least daunt him, and he stood quite ready to waste as much more money in the same way, if he could but get his hands upon it. Sinsinawa Mound and Gratiot's Grove were also among the points we stopped at. The country was overflowing with prospectors, miners and those who thought to pick up a living in various ways, while the excitement lasted. There were fully two thousand men in the country north of Galena, and we frequently came up with

little groups of two or more, trudging painfully along with their bundles slung over their shoulders, or perhaps encamped by the wayside; while to come upon a couple of rough fellows sitting on a log or stone, playing old sledge for each other's last dollar, was no uncommon experience. We rode through the country with our horse and buggy,—hired at Galena,—with perfect ease and freedom, and met with no semblance of opposition from either white man or red.

There were from one thousand to fifteen hundred people resident in Galena, at that time. It was a lively little town. The houses were none of them painted, but there was that “snap” about the place that gave promise of great things in the future. Ezekiel Lockwood was the chief business man, and had a big store. L. M. R. Morse was another heavy trader. The mining country was supplied with men from Galena's large floating population. Speculators were as numerous as sand-flies in Green Bay, the majority of them coming from points lower down on the Mississippi.

The miners were in mortal fear of the Indians, and few of them thought of permanently settling in the lead country; their object being to get what they could from the diggings, so long as peace lasted, and be prepared to leave for the Illinois settlements again, on short notice. Galena had, however, cautiously sent out a few frontier colonies, but none of them at any great distance. The only settlements 399 we saw, that looked anything like attempts to stay, were at Dodge's stockade, and Henry Gratiot's grove.

After our inspection of the mining country, we returned home from Galena the way we had come,— via Prairie du Chien and Portage. On the Fox river, at about Butte des Morts, we met Maj. David E. Twiggs, with three companies of soldiers in boats, on their way to establish the garrison of Fort Winnebago. Jefferson Davis, just graduated from West Point, was one of his lieutenants. Both parties stopped and we had some conversation. All of us knew Twiggs, who bore a bad character. He had a private named William Prestige, in his boat, securely chained; this Prestige, exasperated by brutal treatment, had attempted to take Twiggs's life, and the latter, by way of revenge, kept him in irons and under the

harshest treatment allowable by the code, until his term of enlistment expired, in the year following.1

1 *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, vii., p. 375.— Ed.

The jurisdiction of Michigan extended west of the Mississippi and, with the exception of the two trading posts at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien, was exclusively an Indian country west of Lake Michigan. Hostile tribes wandered over it at will, casting an evil eye upon any encroachment upon their extensive and beautiful domain. The Red Bird war culminated in opening the mineral region west of Blue Mounds to miners in search of its hidden wealth. East of that landmark was an unexplored wilderness. Having now visited the mining country, I had a natural desire to extend my explorations through the remainder of the territory now known as Wisconsin.

Judge Doty and I,—in company with Wistweaw (Blacksmith), a Menomonee Indian, and Alex. Grignon,2 a young half-blood Menomonee, as helpers,—left Green Bay on horseback, in the spring of 1829, and traversed the region hitherto little known, south of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. We were the first party, so far as I can ascertain, to make the trip by land between the extreme outposts of this section, Green Bay and Prairie du Chien. Proceeding along the summit of the high ridge which hems in Lake Winnebago,

2 *Id.*, x., p. 484.— Ed.

400 on the east,—the line afterwards adopted for the government road,—we headed for Fond du Lac. At Calumet, on the way, we saw a small Menomonee village resting on the lake shore, but did not go down to it, keeping steadily on our way along the ridge and through the prairie which lies to the east of the lake. At Fond du Lac there was a Winnebago village, but we crossed the river without visiting the savages, for whose company we were not over anxious. Wistweaw, however, was sent back there to engage a guide to pilot us to the Four Lake country. These lakes, together with Green and Fox lakes, were landmarks more or less familiar in name to the old traders, through

their employés engaged in collecting furs from the Indian villages of the interior. But no white man, it may be confidently stated, had ever yet visited the country with a view of ascertaining its adaptability for becoming the abode of civilized life. There was then scarce an opening in the forest west of Detroit.

After some waiting, our Menomonee returned in company with a Winnebago, mounted on a scrubby pony, who volunteered to show us the way across the country. The guide did very well for five or six miles, then pushed ahead for a mile or two and flung himself on the grass. When we had caught up, we asked him to remount and go ahead; but he made no sign of moving and sulkily exclaimed that he never had been the slave of a white man and never would be. He was finally induced to put us on the trail for Lake Horicon and then, giving the lash to his pony, started back to his village on a lope. Lake Horicon, we found to be only a marsh. At its head, there was a cluster of Winnebago wigwams. The Indians there, essayed to put us on the trail to Four Lakes, but we brought out at the Green-lake prairie, where we struck another village of the Winnebagoes. To seek information there, was impossible, for the women and children hid themselves, and the bucks were assembled in their long medicine lodge, gambling, and would pay no attention to us whatever.

Thus left to our own resources, we set off due south across the prairie, until, to our great joy, we found a deep-cut trail 401 which we followed until it brought us into the woods east of the Four Lake country.1 The Four Lakes, called in Winnebago Taychoperah, gave name to the entire region for many miles in their vicinity, but no one, at that early period, could have thought of establishing there the capital of a great state. I was particularly interested in the lakes, myself, because I knew that from them I could see Blue Mound, and thenceforth I should feel acquainted with the country. On the south shore of Third lake, also on the north shore of Fourth,—east of where Pheasant Branch now is,2 — we found a few Winnebago Indians located. Proceeding westward, just south of Blue Mound, we struck a road leading from Sugar river, on which mineral bad been hauled, and followed it to McCrary's furnace, a few miles southwest of the mound. There we met

the first whites we had seen since leaving Green Bay. From McCrary's we went on to Dodgeville, where we stopped in a sort of hotel over night, and the next day we crossed the level country to Prairie du Chien.

1 *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, x., pp. 74, 75; the itinerary of the tour is given, note 1, p. 74.— Ed.

2 White Crow's village, situated near the mouth of the upper Catfish, about where Fox's bluff is.— Ed.

At the Prairie, Judge Doty held a term of court, and I officiated as United States district attorney, *pro tem* .

On returning home, we proceeded overland, as before, but with some change as to trail. We passed by the way of Blue Mound, along the north bank of Fourth lake, near the small Indian village I have previously mentioned. We had a full view of both Third and Fourth lakes and the high land between them, on which Madison is now situated, but found no trail leading in that direction and presumably no villages existed there, showing its occupancy by the Winnebagoes at that time. The nearest wigwams were the two clusters I have already mentioned. It is possible that on our out-going trip, Governor Dory and I passed over State University hill. We passed from the village on the south shore of Third lake to that on the north shore of Fourth, with Lake Wingra on our left. We at that time 402 had no thought of founding cities, nor for some years after. The “City of the Four Lakes,” on the north side of Fourth lake, was laid out by me in 1836, on the same ground subsequently owned by Col. William B. Slaughter.

Proceeding from the Four Lakes to Fort Winnebago, we crossed over to the south bank of the Fox. At Butte des Morts, we were ferried over, our horses swimming behind, and proceeded along the west bank of Lake Winnebago and the lower Fox, to Green Bay. The country through which we had passed on our novel journey was,—after reaching a distance of thirty miles from Green Bay,—more charming than any we had ever beheld, with its extensive oak-openings and almost unlimited prairies. There was not, however, a

trace of occupancy or any indication that it had ever before been traversed by white men. It is not strange that a few years after witnessed its rapid settlement and improvement by hardy frontiersmen.1

1 The late Henry S. Baird was also of this horseback party, from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien, although Judge Martin seemed to have forgotten the fact, at the time of the interview. In *The Green Bay Gazette*, April 2, 1870, Mr. Baird gave the following account of the tour:

“In the year 1825, '26, '27, and '28, Judge Dory and the writer traveled from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien in a bark canoe, by way of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers; our crew was composed of six or seven Canadians and Indians: time occupied in making the trip seven to eight days going and the same in returning. The country was then an entire wilderness, there being no white settlements or inhabitants, except at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien.

”In May, 1829, Judge Doty, M. L. Martin, Esq., and the writer, left Green Bay on horseback, and went through the country to Prairie du Chien. We were accompanied by a Menomonee Indian as guide, who led or rode a pack horse. Our route was not a direct one, as our Indian was not well acquainted with the country west of Lake Winnebago; we traveled on the east side of that lake to Fond du Lac, thence by way of Green lake to the Four Lakes (crossing the outlet between Second and Third lakes), the Blue Mound, Dodgeville, and crossed the Wisconsin about six miles above its confluence with the Mississippi river. We were about seven days in making the journey, and saw no white people until we reached the Blue Mound. We were the first party of white men that had attempted and accomplished the land journey from Green Bay to the Mississippi.

“In those early days the accommodations for holding the court were neither extensive nor elegant. There were no regular court-houses or public buildings, the courts were held in log school-houses, where there were such, or in rooms provided for the special occasion, destitute of comfortable seats and other fixtures for use of court, bar or jurors. In May,

1826, when the term of the court was to be held at Prairie du Chien, on our arrival we found the old town entirely *under water*, the inundation being caused by the overflowing of both the Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers. The troops had abandoned the fort, and the inhabitants had fled to the high grounds near the bluffs—but two or three houses were occupied, and only the upper stories in those. It will naturally be imagined that under such circumstances the court could not be held. But not so—a largo barn, situated on dry ground, was selected and fitted up for the accommodation of the court, bar and suitors! The court occupied the extensive threshing-floor, about fourteen by thirty-five feet. The jurors occupied the hay and grain mows on either side of the court. When the jury retired to agree upon their verdict, they were conducted by an officer to another barn or stable. Such was the condition of affairs in the early years of Wisconsin history."— Ed.

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In October, 1829, the first public meeting in the history of Green Bay was held here. Louis Grignon was chairman, while I officiated as secretary. We petitioned congress to build a road from the Bay to Chicago, and also to improve the Fox and Wisconsin rivers.

About 1830, a Shot Tower company was organized, principally composed of gentlemen living here and in Detroit, with one from Oswego. The firm name was Daniel Whitney, Platte and Co. They built a tower on the face of a cliff at Old Helena or Pine Bend, on the south bank of the Wisconsin river, twenty miles northwest of Blue Mound.1 Considerable shot was made here. Daniel Whitney was the superintendent and had a man named Greene working the concern for him. Greene was shot near the fort at Blue Mound, in the Black Hawk war, in 1832.2

1 The remains of this tower can still be seen, near the south end of the new Spring Green wagon bridge, which was erected in 1887. See *Hist. Iowa Co.* (West. Hist. Co., 1881), pp. 472, 473, for detailed description of tower.— Ed.

2 June 20. *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, ii., p. 351, and subsequent volumes.— Ed.

While I was a member of the Michigan territorial legislature, in session at Detroit, this same company got me to obtain a charter for them, to build a canal between the Fox 404 and Wisconsin rivers. A ditch was dug across the prairie, about on a line with the old portage trail, farther down the Wisconsin than the present canal. But the trench was never filled with water except when the Wisconsin was high, and proved to be of no use.1

1 *Hist. Columbia Co*. (West. Hist. Co., 1880), p. 610. Ed.

I first visited Milwaukee in July, 1833, on a tour of exploration. With me, were Daniel Le Roy and P. B. Grignon, and we were mounted on horses. As far as Fond du Lac, our course lay on the same trail that Judge Dory and I had made in 1829. After that, we struck southeast to the shore of Lake Michigan, following it closely until the Milwaukee river was reached. Jacques Vieau and Solomon Juneau traded at this point. I had known them and their families since 1827, for their homes were really in Green Bay, at which place they obtained all their supplies. Both Vieau, senior, and Juneau were in Chicago, with the greater part of their families, at the time of our arrival; but young Jacques Vieau, son of the elder, officiated under the parental roof.

When we set out on our tour, we agreed to eat everything we saw, and one time were compelled to thus dispose of a hawk. At Milwaukee, there were no provisions for us; but there were several Indians loafing around and we engaged one of them to go out and get us some ducks. These, Jacques cooked for us, and we ate them cold upon our return trip, which was made by the way of the lake shore. On Sheboygan river, four miles above the mouth, there was an Indian village. We found a net spread near the mouth of the river, and in it two fine fish which we appropriated without ceremony. Next morning, an Indian from the village overtook us and supplied us with dried and smoked whitefish, which we found quite palatable. Manitowoc was out of our line, so we did not see the native village said to be there. The only other lodges on our course were at Waukesha and Milwaukee.

We reached Green Bay after a delightful trip, in which the eager search for provisions only served to strengthen our appetites.

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Both Solomon Juneau and Jacques Vieau were intelligent and worthy men, Mr. Juneau having the polished manners and airs of the French gentleman. In a certain *History of Milwaukee* ,1 the latter has been described as being on a par with the Indians, as to intelligence and manners.2 That they and their families were far removed above the savage tribes by which they were surrounded, is proven by the fact that they were enabled to procure goods and supplies to a large amount on the usual credit from the American Fur Company. Neither of them did at that time regard themselves as permanent settlers of Milwaukee; but were temporary residents there for purposes of trade with the Indians. Their homes were in Green Bay. When I first visited Milwaukee in the summer of 1833, on the tour of exploration before narrated, they and their families were not there, the premises being in charge of employés and one of Vieau's sons. A further evidence that all were mere sojourners was found in the fact that no land was cleared, fenced, or even under cultivation, except a small patch of ground used by a brother of Juneau, in which he cultivated a few vegetables. Subsequent events, however, proved Solomon Juneau to be the first permanent settler, when the land he occupied was ceded by the Indians and subjected to sale as government land.

1 Published by Western Historical Co. in 1881.— Ed.

2 These remarks about Solomon Juneau are in the main identical with a letter,—dated Green Bay, June 21, 1881,—which Judge Martin wrote to the Milwaukee Pioneer Association, in defense of Mr. Juneau from reflections made upon him by the historical work in question. For details of the dispute, see *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 26, 1881, and Buck's *Milwaukee Under the Charter*, iii., appendix; the portions of the county history especially controverted are, pp. 65, 69.— Ed.

From 1833 forward, I was a frequent and always welcome visitor to the house of Solomon Juneau. His home was the “old trading house,” and so far from being the filthy, disgusting home represented in the *History of Milwaukee* , was in all respects neat and comfortable; for the proverbially neat and tidy French women know how to make their habitations attractive. In the fall of 1834 the late Governor Doty, Byron Kilbourn and myself were at Milwaukee and 406 spent a few days, being entertained at the hospitable old trading house, the only habitation there. In April previous, on my way home from Detroit, Mr. Juneau's house was my only stopping place between Chicago and Green Bay; my business relations with him compelled my sojourn there for several days. At none of my visits did the “stinking skins” or the “odors” given off by fresh meats and fish which had become rank before being consigned to the “spit,” produce an unsavory perfume. If there were any such, they never invaded the comfortable dwelling in which we were entertained, but were confined to the storehouse, the usual adjunct to all Indian trading posts.

As a man, Solomon Juneau needs no encomiums from me. He was always the same unselfish, confiding, open-hearted, genial, honest and polite gentleman. Our business relations commenced in October, 1833, and continued for several years.1 His first hint of the prospective value of his location at Milwaukee came from me, and he was so incredulous that it was sometimes difficult to prevent his sacrificing his interest to the sharks who soon gathered around him. Himself the soul of honor, and unaccustomed to the wiles of speculators, without a friend to caution him he would have been an easy prey of designing individuals. Green Bay was his home as well as that of the Vieaus, and it was not until 1835 or 1836 that Juneau first thought of permanently residing in Milwaukee,— after it came to be seen that the place was going to become a village.

1 Buck's *Pion. Hist. Milwaukee*, i., pp. 16–18.— Ed.

Juneau and I were joint owners of the original plat of Milwaukee. We never made any written memorandum of the terms of our partnership, and on account of his residence on the spot he took the principal management of our joint interest for more than three years.

At the close, accounts between us were adjusted and property valued at hundreds of thousands divided, with as little difficulty as you would settle a trifling store bill.

It would take a volume to enumerate the many admirable traits of character which distinguished my late friend, Solomon Juneau. The intimate relations existing between us 407 made me well acquainted with his family, and their everyday social relations. Mrs. Juneau, instead of the pure French of her husband, had a slight tincture of Indian blood.1 Her native tongue was French, and that language was used in their family intercourse, though both spoke English. They both probably had also acquired a knowledge of the languages of several Indian tribes, with whom Mr. Juneau was accustomed to do business; but that they “dressed and ate like Indians, and in their domestic conversation spoke in the Indian tongue,” is far from the truth. Mrs. Juneau was a most amiable and excellent woman, and many of the first settlers around Milwaukee will no doubt bear ample testimony to the deeds of charity by which she was distinguished.

1 See *ante*, p. 219, note 3.— Ed.

Gov. Henry Dodge was a straight, fine-looking man, quite pompous, and deserving of credit for the able manner in which he discharged his various public duties, military and civil. But he was deficient in early education; and his habit of continually suspecting the motives of other men was one of the convincing proofs of that defect. When I was a delegate in congress, in 1845, Dodge and I were appointed commissioners to treat with the Oneidas of this section. The object was to advance the condition of these people and induce them to take up homesteads. It so happened that I was belated and could not go out to Duck Creek, where the treaty was held, before taking my seat in congress. Dodge went out alone and could do nothing with the Indians. Augustus C. Dodge, his son, and a warm friend of mine, afterwards told me that General Dodge was ever after much put out with me, imagining that my reason for not going was, that I knew the Oneidas could not then be treated with and I desired to avoid the odium of failure.

Although of testy temper, Governor Dodge had a kind heart. In the legislative council, in 1838, James R. Vineyard, of Grant county, and I, got into a little difficulty, and 408 Vineyard threatened to shoot me. The governor heard of the disturbance and, getting us together in his room, reconciled us.

On Friday, the 11th of February, 1842, in the council chamber at Madison, Vineyard shot and mortally wounded my colleague from Brown county, Charles C. P. Arndt.1 The following day I addressed the council on the death of Arndt and offered resolutions of sympathy with the widow and for preparations for the funeral,2 which were adopted. I also drew up the resolutions which were offered by Ebenezer Brigham, of Dane, Monday, February 14, formally expelling Vineyard from the council, despite the fact that he had handed in a letter of resignation. Every member of the council voted for these resolutions except Moses M. Strong, of Mineral Point, who became one of Vineyard's counsel. Vineyard never entertained any hostility to me for what I did. That same winter I was in Platteville. He sought me out and expressed himself strongly on the subject of the tragedy, saying he had not slept a night since the event and would readily change places with Arndt.

1 Strong's *Hist. Wis. Terr.*, pp. 380–385.— Ed.

2 *Council Jour., Wis. Terr. Legis.*, 1842, p. 306.— Ed.

I was president of the second state constitutional convention, which assembled at Madison, Dec. 15, 1847, and have distinct recollections of the leading spirits in that body. The strongest man in it was Judge Charles Dunn. I looked upon him as eminently sensible and conscientious. He was very much of an American in his instincts, and whenever the suffrage article was being discussed was strongly inclined to impose restrictions upon the citizenship of the foreign born and the exercise of suffrage by them. Judge Edward V. Whiton was another strong man in the convention,—a very efficient and reasonable man, with a great deal of forethought. Whiten was always ready to express sensible ideas

on every question that came up. His was such a broad character that he developed no specialty during the great conference; he left his mark upon no especial 409 feature of the perfected instrument, but helped mold all portions alike. F. S. Lovell, of Kenosha, was another man with a broad, general mind, without a specialty but overflowing with good sense and apt suggestion. Of course there were many others whom I might mention with justice, but Dunn, Whiton and Lovell are those who stand out most prominently in my memory as the leading general workers in the body.1

1 Brief biographical sketches of the members of both constitutional conventions may be found in Tenney and Atwood's *Fathers of Wisconsin* (Madison, 1880), a useful publication. — Ed.

There were many men in the convention who appeared to have an eye to their political hereafter and were continually looking after their fences. But as a whole it was a sensible body. There were no serious mistakes. The constitution evolved was, I thought, about what the best class of our people desired it to be. Of course the debates were not without some extreme talk. There were some members whom I thought to be quite visionary on the women's rights question,—not as to the suffrage of women, but as to their exemptions and property holding. There was a wide difference of opinion in the convention, on these topics, but the majority thought it best to leave the people, represented in legislature, to determine the matter. The members of the first constitutional convention made their gravest mistake in determining and fixing exemptions; and the popular discontent with their work was largely on this score. The second convention started in to avoid the rocks upon which the instrument of the first had been wrecked. Several mooted questions were thus left to the people for subsequent legislative decision,—banks, for instance. The object of the second convention was to draft a constitution that would be popular, and this could only be done by allowing the people to fight over such questions of policy among themselves.

The first movement by the general government towards the improvement of the Fox-Wisconsin river highway,—with a view to making a continuous line of navigation from 410 Lake Michigan to the Mississippi river,—was made in 1839, while I was in the territorial council. Capt. Thomas J. Cram, of the topographical engineers, made, under the direction of the war department, a preliminary survey of the rivers and an estimate of the cost of their improvement. In 1846, while a delegate in congress, I secured, by dint of very hard work, the passage of an act (approved August 8) making a grant o f land to the state, upon its admission into the union, for the improvement of the Fox river alone, and the building of a canal across the portage between the two rivers. The grant covered every odd-numbered section within three miles of the canal, the river and the lakes, en route from the portage to the mouth. When the second constitutional convention was held, this proposition on the part of congress was endorsed, and at the first session of the state legislature, the latter body passed an act, approved August 8, 1848, appointing a board of public works, consisting of five persons, and providing for the improvement of the river. The members of the board were elected in joint session of the legislature,1 the same day, as follows: H. L. Dousman, Curtis Reed, John A. Bingham, Albert S. Story and James B. Estes.

1 *Wis. Senate Jour.*, 1848, pp. 353–356.— Ed.

By the year 1850, the board had used up all the money they could raise by selling the lands. They had, in fact, anticipated the sales, and the affairs in their charge were in bad shape. On the 1st of January, 1851, they reported to the legislature2 that the work would have to stop, unless some device for a more rapid sale of land could be originated. While the affair was in this condition, I made a proposition to the legislature, through Governor Dewey,3 to do the work from Green Bay to Lake Winnebago, except what the board of public works had finished or was already under contract for. The board had dug the canal at Portage, before there was any steam navigation possible on the lower Fox. One of the chief features of its mismanagement

2 *Wis. Assembly Jour.*, 1851, pp. 1003–1032.— Ed.

3 The governor's message and Judge Martin's proposition and contract are given in full in *Wis. Senate Jour.*, 1851, doc. F., appendix.— Ed.

411 was, that the board allowed itself to be influenced by members of the legislature, each of whom wanted a portion of the money spent in his district, without regard to the general need. My proposition was, in effect, that the state should not be held liable for expenses attending the completion of the improvement, but that the tolls and the sale of lands should supply the means to reimburse me. The governor, in his message to the senate, said: “It is believed that the proposition of Mr. Martin is a very favorable one for the state, and, if accepted, will ensure the final completion of this important work at a much earlier day than the state can possibly accomplish it, in any other constitutional manner. * * * The early completion of this improvement will be promoted by its acceptance and would be economical.”

The legislature of 1851 accepted my proposition1 and I went to work with about five hundred men, commencing at Kaukauna. Operations were carried on throughout that season, along the entire distance from Green Bay to Lake Winnebago. By the terms of my contract, the governor was to give me scrip, to be paid from the sale of lands and from the tolls on the work.2 Governor Farwell came into office on the 5th of January, 1852. On the 16th, in his message to the legislature,3 the governor reported that $26,000 had been paid to me for the season's work, in state scrip, and intimated that my contract was unconstitutional. He afterwards refused to give me any more of the scrip that had been lawfully earned; and I was obliged to secure the

1 Act approved March 11; contract was signed May 14.— Ed.

2 The contract read: “I propose to complete the whole work on or before the first day of May, 1853, the same to be accepted as fast as completed. The work to be paid for, from the sales of land granted (and to be granted) in aid of the improvement, so far as the funds

can be raised from that source. The amount due for the whole contract when completed, and remaining unpaid, to constitute a debt against the improvement, the interest of which, at twelve per cent., shall be paid from tolls to be collected on the work, and whenever the state shall realize funds, either from sate of lands or any other source, and pay the balance due on the Contract, debt to be discharged."— Ed.

3 *Wis. Senate Jour.*, 1852, pp. 14–16.— Ed.

412 passage by the legislature of an act1 authorizing the secretary of state to give me certificates of indebtedness, instead of the governor. This was vetoed April 9,2 Governor Farwell laying great stress on the claim that the bill treating with me was in violation of the spirit of both the act of congress making the land grant and the constitution of the United States. Attorney General Experience Estabrook, however, gave it as his opinion that the scrip issued to me was constitutional, and a joint committee of the legislature reported unanimously that the work had been conducted well and honorably. The legislature, therefore, passed the bill over the veto, and I resumed work. The trouble with the governor, however, had greatly shortened my season, for the uncertainty of the issue had obliged me to lose the advantage of early preparation, and it was not until July 14 that the governor consented to have certificates issued under the act.

1 Chapter 340, *Gen. Laws Wis.*, 1852.— Ed.

2 *Wis. Senate Jour.*, 1852, pp. 591–599,— Ed.

At the session of 1853, the governor proposed, in a message to the legislature dated February 9,3 to "submit the works to private enterprise," and have the skirts of the state cleared from all financial responsibility. It was urged by the governor that the moneys realized from the sale of lands were insufficient to meet the state's obligations. I therefore had a company formed, styled the Fox and Wisconsin Improvement Company, of whom Mason C. Darling, Otto Tank, Edgar Conklin, Benjamin F. Moore, Joseph G. Lawton, Uriah H. Peak, Theodore Conkey, I and others were members. The articles of association

were dated the 1st of June, 1853. This company was incorporated by the state under act approved July 6,4 and to it was transferred the entire work, under condition that it fulfill the obligations of the state to all classes of contractors on the improvement.

3 *Id.*, 1853, pp. 181–194.

4 Chapter 98, *Gen. Laws Wis.*, 1853.— Ed.

The Improvement Company went on with the work, under this act, until 1856, when the first boat, the Aquila, passed 413 through the works,—from Pittsburg to Green Bay. Captain Brooks, who was afterwards master of the craft, died in Green Bay early in June, 1887. The Aquila was brought through by Charles Green, of Green Bay, who had purchased her at Pittsburg. I afterwards acquired an interest in the vessel and held it for some years. She, with the Pioneer, which I also owned, made regular trips between Green Bay and Fond du Lac.

By act of congress approved Aug. 3, 1854 (construed by resolution of March 3, 1855), we had obtained an increase in our land grant,1 for the work was broadening out, as the years went on, and the depth of water sought was greater than at first. We thereupon located a large body of fine land. The legislature, under chapter 64, general laws of 1855, authorized us to increase our capital stock to $250,000, and that same year we were compelled to seek outside capital to swing the growing enterprise. The newcomers were New York capitalists, of whom Horatio Seymour, Erastus Corning and Hiram Barney were the leading spirits. This movement proved an exceedingly unfortunate one for us. The New York men deranged all our plans, and the upshot was that they got us into a position where we were obliged to submit, in February, 1866, to a foreclosure of the bonds and sale of the whole concern to the New Yorkers. The big imported fish swallowed the little natives.

1 The area of the whole grant on the Fox river, under this construction, was estimated at 684,269 acres, in report of select assembly committee, March 31, 1856. See also, reply to this report, by Theodore Conkey.— Ed.

On the 15th of August, 1866, the purchasers at the February sale became incorporated as the Green Bay and Mississippi Canal Company. But the surveys were thereafter conducted by government engineers.2

2 Under instructions issued from the engineer department in July, 1866.— Ed.

In 1871, the secretary of war, acting under act of congress approved July 7, 1870, secured an appraisal of the company's plant,—improvements, water-powers and personal property. By act approved June 10, 1872, an appropriation was made by government to purchase the improvement alone, and in 414 October the company deeded the works to the United States. I put in a claim before the government commissioners, for a large amount of work performed, for which I had as yet received no compensation. The claim was allowed as just, but the company coolly collected the money. My suit for recovery brought me only about one half of the amount, and I have had no end of litigation with them ever since. I presume that I have spent much more in these suits than I ever received.

We would have got along well enough, in the old cómpany, if we could have secured favorable legislation. But there was a continual wrangle at Madison over our affairs; sectional and official jealousies were ever hatching up new troubles for us. Then again, the legislature had issued scrip at twelve per cent. interest to other contractors as well as myself,—notwithstanding that I had been secured to finish the work alone,—and thus my contract was thrown into discredit. At the time i took the original contract, I considered myself well-to-do in this world's goods. In order to start the work, I ran into debt fully $100,000 for supplies to furnish men, to purchase an immense number of tools and teams and to keep up an extensive pay-roll. These heavy obligations were a severe and almost crushing tax upon my finances, while the mental distress incident to these long years of

doubt and wrangling was of a character that admitted of no adequate recompense, even had the venture been a profitable one.1

1 Dwight I. Follett, in *The Green Bay Gazette*, Dec. 14, 1887, makes the following interesting statement, the result of conversations with Judge Martin on this topic: “To Morgan L. Martin belongs the credit of originating the scheme of the improvement of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, and to his arduous, protracted and almost unaided efforts is due the beginning of the work which he lived to see a reality and the route a national highway under government protection. Very soon after he came to Green Bay, and in October, 1829, he called a meeting at his office (near where the Milwaukee and Northern railway depot now stands) to agitate that project. Mr. Martin presided. Resolutions in that behalf were passed and forwarded to congress. Within the past few months, in the course of a conversation on that subject, in reply to the question as to what led him to originate that scheme, Judge Martin said that the idea was first suggested to his mind by the fact that in the year 1828 the 5th regiment U. S. infantry came to Fort Howard on Durham boats, from Jefferson barracks, below St. Louis. Their baggage was loaded on the boats at that point and not unloaded until reaching here. The water at Portage happened to be high that year.” In *Hist. Columbia Co*. (West. Hist. Co., 1880), pp. 448–453, can be found an historical sketch of the Fox-Wisconsin improvement; see also, *Wisconsin Blue Book* for 1870 and a considerable collection of pamphlets on the topic, in the Society's library.— Ed.